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The Northern Gateway

A HISTORY

OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN



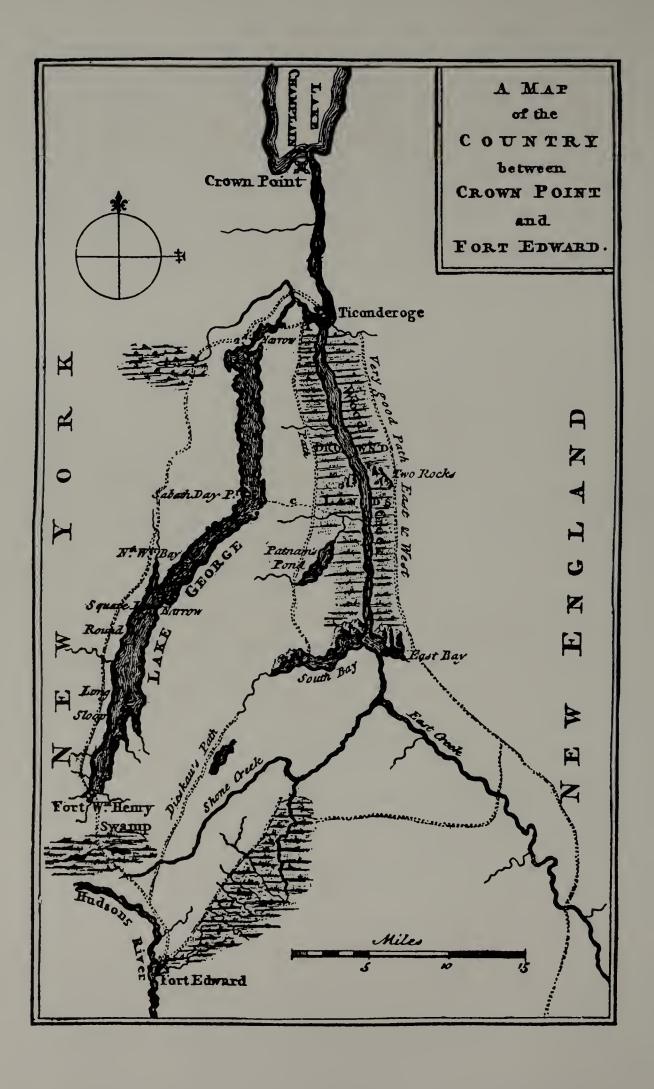
THE MOUNT HOPE FORT Ticonderoga, N. Y.

By

CARROLL VINCENT LONERGAN







The Northern Gateway

A HISTORY OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN

And Guide To
INTERESTING PLACES
IN THE GREAT VALLEY

Ву

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BETWEEN the beaten slopes of the verdant Adirondacks and the gentle, rolling hills of the Green Mountains, a great inland sea has for centuries rolled its waves upon the sands of New York and Vermont. When it was formed is not quite certain, but sometime, ages ago, it sprang into being when mountains were pushed up around it and the rivers and the streams from them sought an outlet in the great valley. It is one of the oldest bodies of water in America and from an historical viewpoint, is by far the most important. Its present name is Lake Champlain.

Over the limpid waters of this majestic lake, the contending armies of mighty nations have passed, intent on plunder, bloodshed and conquest. Down through the ages its position of importance in the history of America has been unparalleled. It has been truly "The Gateway to our Country."

From minute study and observation we have assumed that, in the early years of Indian warfare, this famous water route and the land adjacent to it was used by the Indians as a hunting and warring ground and not as a permanent home. Here it was that the fierce Iroquois and Algonquins met in bloody conflict; the Iroquois ever the aggressor, the Algonquins ever the defender.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the land along the Mohawk and around the Finger Lakes was the home of the Iroquois, a mighty nation of five tribes, the most progressive Indians of that time. The Iroquois Indians' cruelty in war was equaled only by their bravery. Strange to say they were not cruel to their enemies from a sense of blood lust, but rather because they considered it a part of their religion. It was a sign of weakness in them, they thought, to show any inclination toward compassion for a foe. They gave no quarter to a captive, and if they were taken, they expected none.

The Iroquois warriors were kind to their women. They would not allow them to be called squaws and even gave them a voice in their council when important decisions faced the nation. Nevertheless, they expected the women to do their appointed tasks without help. Any brave who assisted a woman in her work was reprimanded severely.

Many years before, the great orator, Hiawatha, had gone about among the nations of the Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas, Mohawks, and Oneidas. By his mighty powers of speech, he finally united them into a confederacy, the like of which had never before been seen on this continent and was not seen again until the thirteen colonies broke from England. These five nations became bound together by inseparable ties, always fighting as allies in war and living as allies in peace. In 1715, the Tuscaroras joined the Iroquois confederacy which was then and after referred to as the Six Nations. These Indians claimed all the land on both sides of Lake Champlain and north to the St. Lawrence.

The banks of the St. Lawrence, however, were at this time inhabited by the Algonquins, another Indian tribe nearly as civilized as the Iroquois and fully as fierce in battle. They were friendly with the Hurons, a tribe residing to the west of Lake Ontario, and the two united to defend their lands from the increasing encroachments of their common enemy, the Iroquois.

History tells us that the first record of organized warfare on Lake Champlain was that which took place between these tribes. The general pattern of war was for a party of Iroquois or Algonquins to leave their villages, paddle over the vast waters of the "Inland Sea" to the home of their enemies, there to plunder and burn and then escape with as many prisoners as possible. With these they returned to their villages. Here the prisoners were tortured and maimed beyond description until life finally fled from their broken bodies.

The Algonquins were perhaps a little less thrifty than the Iroquois. At any rate many of their warring parties became so reduced for want of food that they lowered themselves to the degrading occupation of eating the bark from trees. In derision, the Iroquois gave to these the name, "Adarondacks," which meant, in their language, "Tree Eaters." The word was used time and

again and was eventually given as a name to the great mountains in which the Algonquins lived and hunted.

How long this struggle between these tribes had been going on we do not know, but it is believed that it had reached the peak of its fierceness in 1609. In that year France sent to America an explorer of the highest order; a personality who bore hardships and suffering without complaint; a man whose zeal and endeavor built, for France, an empire in America. His name was Samuel de Champlain. In 1609 he founded Quebec, the heart of New France, and in that same year began explorations to the south.

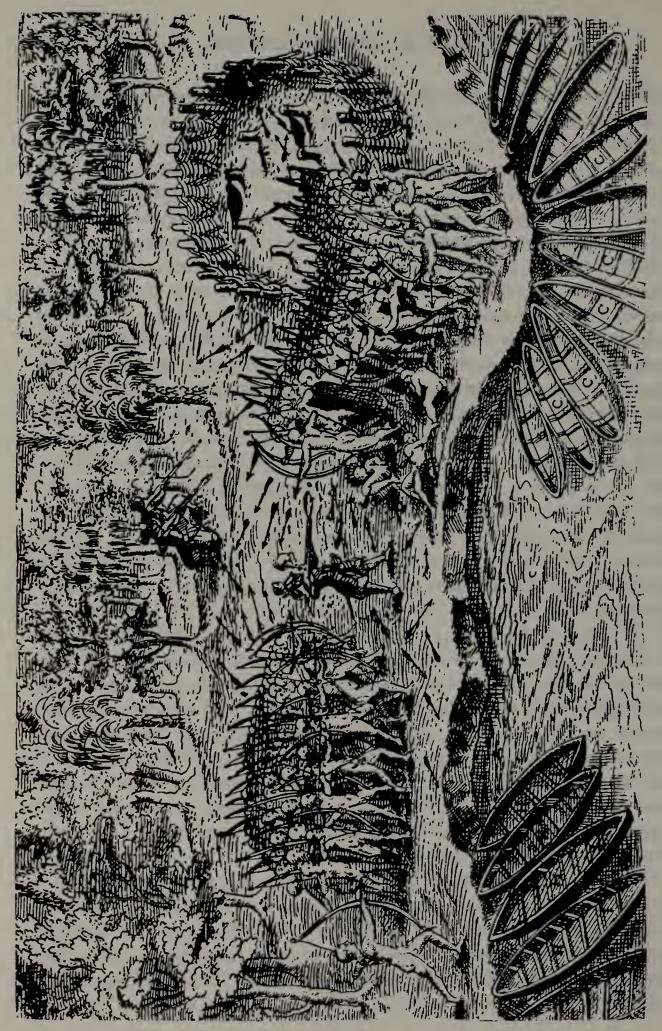
In casting about for friendly guides, Champlain and his French companions fell in with a band of warring Algonquins bent on an expedition into Iroquois country. Champlain joined them and on July third the little party, with the Christian explorer at its head, entered upon the majestic lake to which he afterwards gave his name.

They proceeded south to a spot near Fort Ticonderoga. There they came upon a band of Iroquois. By mutual consent, the two parties landed and fought a battle. As the first war-whoops rose from the lips of the Iroquois, Champlain flung his gun to his shoulder and fired. Three Mohawk chiefs fell dead. The rest, terror stricken, turned and fled while the Algonquins pursued them, returning later with a number of prisoners.

The Algonquins were jubilant. Champlain shared their joy for he felt that, in them, he had gained a strong ally for France. He did not realize that, by this single act, he had directed the hostility of the Iroquois against the French and had created a violent hatred on the part of the Mohawks which time could not heal and which the "blood of a thousand victims could not soften."

It is interesting to note that this battle occurred three months prior to the discovery of the Hudson River, eleven years before the Mayflower cast anchor and only one hundred and seventeen years after the landing of Columbus.

Shortly after his return to Canada, Champlain became its Governor General (1620). In 1629, he surrendered the government to the English and returned to France. A few years later (1632) Canada was restored to France and a year later Champlain was again appointed Governor, a position which he held until his death in 1635.



CHAMPLAIN'S BATTLE WITH IROQUOIS A drawing by Champlain, taken from his diary

The period immediately following the death of Champlain was uneventful in the great valley with the exception of an occasional war party, hunting expedition or missionary group. Of all the brave missionaries, Father Isaac Jogues is probably the best known. He came to America from France in 1636 to work among the Algonquins. While in their midst he was captured by an Iroquois war party. Extreme tortures were inflicted upon him. His fingernails were torn out by the roots and his hands mutilated in other ways. Many times he was forced to run the gauntlet which he described as "a short road to Paradise."

Father Joques was the first white man to see Lake George which he named Lake St. Sacrement. Later he was taken by the Iroquois to one of the Mohawk towns and there condemned to death. His missionary friends who were captured with him had already been killed. Father Jogues resigned himself to his fate but, to his surprise, was rescued by some Dutch Traders from Fort Orange (Albany). He returned to France, where he received special dispensation from the Pope to celebrate the Mass with mutilated hands.

In 1646 this self-sacrificing missionary returned to America where the Iroquois received him kindly and treated him well for a time. Nevertheless some of the braves hated him bitterly for they thought him a messenger of the wicked spirit. One of these watched him closely and one day, as he was stooping to enter his tent, struck him a blow with a tomahawk, killing him instantly. Father Jogues has since been canonized as a saint.

About 1641 an inclination on the part of the Iroquois to move North caused the French some alarm. To protect themselves from this danger, they erected a fort at the mouth of the Richelieu River and somewhat later moved farther south and erected another at the falls of the Chambly. Things went well for a few years, but the French, ever on the alert, again pressed south and, in 1665, constructed Fort St. Anne on Isle La Motte, near the northern end of the lake. Their purpose in this was to establish a base for attacks to the south. Historians tell us that it was French and Indians from this stronghold who paddled swiftly up the lake and glided noiselessly through the forests to massacre Schenectady in 1690 and old Saratoga in 1745.

Fort St. Anne, at Isle La Motte, was also the seat of the first organized effort to promote Christianity in the Great Valley. Courageous Jesuit priests celebrated Mass at the shrine of St. Anne as early as 1666.

In 1664 an event took place which made the Champlain Valley more important than ever before. In that year, Stuyvesant surrendered New York to the English. It was at once apparent that she was very hostile to the French occupation of the valley and would do everything possible to prevent further encroachments on their part, southward. As a result of open hostility between France and England, King Philip's War began here in 1689. The Schenectady Massacre, Winthrop's expedition and Captain John and Major Philip Schuyler's expedition against Fort Prairie were events of this war. In 1693, the French and Algonquins moved against the Mohawk towns during which an engagement was fought against Major Philip Schuyler, near Wilton. It was, however, without decisive result.

To end this war, the French and English signed the treaty of Ryswick which was followed shortly by a treaty between the French and Iroquois. Neither of these were of long duration.

The war of the Spanish Succession took place in Europe in 1702, while here it was known as Queen Anne's war. The French, with their Indian allies, attacked the English settlements time and again, sacked innumerable villages and performed atrocities of the worst order. Many families who went to sleep, apparently miles from possible danger, were awakened by the blood curdling whoops of the savages to find their homes already in flames. In trying to defend themselves, they were quickly overwhelmed, killed, and scalped, or taken as prisoners to Canada. During these eventful times, the shores of Lake Champlain echoed often the wild cries of the war parties or the moans and wails of the prisoners, who were tortured for the amusement of their captors while en route to Canada.

Such repeated and terrific aggressions on the part of the French and Indians finally aroused the English Ministry to call her War Lords together and adopt a plan of conquest of the French possessions in America.

THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR

Immediately upon learning of England's plans, Col. Peter Schuyler went about among the Iroquois and persuaded them to cast their lot with England, in case the expected struggle took place. To protect her frontier, Great Britain built a series of blockhouse forts from Schuylerville to the head of Lake Champlain, about 1708. She also sent Nicholeson on two expeditions to Canada. Neither brought definite results, but they greatly alarmed the French, who were poorly prepared to resist an invasion.

In the year 1713, the boundary separating the English from the French was at Split Rock, a few miles above the present village of Westport. France, however, disregarded this boundary line in 1731 and moved southward to a point six miles north of the present Crown Point village where she erected a small wooden stockade on the east shore of the lake. This place was called Point A La Chevelure, which meant "The Scalping Point." It derived its name from the fact that a party of whites had been killed and scalped there a short time before by the Indians.

The next year the Frenchmen grew even more bold and crossed to the New York shore where they built another wooden stockade. They found that this did not suit their needs, so in 1732 they enlarged the structure in various ways. Two years later they erected a stone fort at this point and called it Fort St. Frederic in honor of Frederic Mourepas, who was then French Secretary of State.

During the few years immediately following its erection, Fort St. Frederic was strengthened and enlarged until it became, by 1742, the greatest French fortress in America, outside of Quebec. At that time it mounted sixty-two cannon and would accommodate from 200 to 500 men. Inside the fort was a small chapel where the Mass was often celebrated and where the thrifty French came to worship.

Near the Fort and across the channel in Vermont, a thriving French community of 1,500 people grew up. Here the people tilled the soil and raised their cattle, never doubting but that this would be their permanent home.

In desperation because of France's insolence in building a fort so far south and in violation of the treaty, England finally demanded that the fort be destroyed. In answer to this, France pushed still

FORT ST. FREDERIC, FROM AN OLD PRINT

farther south in 1755 and erected Fort Vaudreuil on the extreme point of the peninsula of Ticonderoga. A short time later, the construction of Fort Carillon was begun, a stronghold which, when completed, was the most formidable fortress on this continent.

Fort Carillon was built on a bluff overlooking a narrow channel through which every war party must pass to go either north or south on the lake. Its advantageous position was evident to the French and they determined to be the first to fortify this coveted location. Two thousand men toiled for more than a year in its construction, for its mighty walls rose high above the bluff, while inside were numerous buildings for the housing of soldiers and equipment. It was a masterpiece of military construction, deemed by many to be impregnable.

The French word "Carillon" means "Chiming Bells." This title was given the fort because, from its location, the music of the waterfall at Ticonderoga could be easily heard.

The colonists dispatched Sir William Johnson against Fort St. Frederic in 1755, but upon reaching the head of Lake George, he stopped and wasted a whole year in the construction of Fort William Henry. This fort was completed in 1756. In the meantime Fort Carillon, in all its sinister splendor, had come into being.

In 1757 Montcalm, the most gallant Frenchman of them all, sallied forth from his stronghold, passed down Lake George with a force of French and Indians and fell upon Fort William Henry. For days the attack continued while Captain Monroe and his English garrison held out bravely, expecting reinforcements to relieve them.

Eventually, with provisions and ammunition running low, Monroe asked Montcalm for terms of surrender. Montcalm's terms stated that the fort should be surrendered, that the English soldiers would be disarmed and that they would be given safe escort to Fort Edward. To this Monroe agreed, innocent of the dire results which were to follow.

No sooner had the English soldiers been disarmed and marched from the fort when Montcalm's Indian allies fell upon them in all their fury. Then ensued a scene of slaughter which defies description. The English, powerless to resist, were massacred in cold blood. The scalping knife and tomahawk were the Indian weapons of attack and were used with deadly effect.

When the savages were eventually brought under control by Montcalm and his officers, a large number of the British lay upon the field. Some had been killed outright, their skulls split by the tomahawks. Others showed no marks upon their countenance but their bodies were a series of fatal stabs, lending silent testimony to the cruel butchery of the Algonquins. A number had been scalped while still alive and even yet stirred spasmodically in their last death agony.

Such was the massacre of Fort William Henry, the only blot on the record of the great Montcalm. He reprimanded his Indians severely and in such a manner that they never after escaped from under his control.

The French remained in the vicinity of Fort William Henry several days. On the night of March 16, the stockade and building of the fort were set afire while into the roaring flames were thrown the bodies of the dead. As the blazing funeral pyre rose skyward, the victorious French receded from that infamous place. On the following morning, nothing was left of the English stronghold but a group of smouldering ashes and a few charred bones.

News of the tragedy of Fort William Henry spread throughout the colonies with great rapidity. England immediately made plans for the annihilation of Montcalm and his army at Ticonderoga. Early in the summer of 1758, the most magnificent and best equipped English army that America had ever seen gathered at the head of Lake George. It was made up of English rank and file and American militiamen. In addition to these was the colorful regiment of Scotch Highlanders, the flower of the English army.

The commander of this mighty army was Abercrombie, a man of fifty-two, raised to his rank by political powers and described at that time as being, "an aged gentleman, unfit in body and mind."

On the morning of the fifth of July the army broke camp, marched to the shore of the lake and there embarked. In all there were one hundred and thirty-five whale boats, nine hundred bateaux and a large number of heavy flat boats for artillery carriage. They floated down the lake in three divisions with the regulars in the center and

the provincials on the flanks. When they entered the narrows, the fleet necessarily extended itself into a column more than six miles long. According to Parkman, "The spectacle was superb—the brightness of the summer day; the romantic beauty of the scenery; the sheen and sparkle of those crystal waters; the countless islets, tufted with pine, birch and fir; the bordering mountains, with their green summits and sunny crags; the flash of oars and the glitter of weapons, the banners, the varied uniforms, and the notes of bugle, trumpet, bagpipe and drum, were answered and prolonged by a hundred woodland echoes."

It was a truly magnificent sight to behold, for the pageantry was marvelous and the soldiers were in fine spirits, full of confidence that the expedition would meet only with great success.

The huge army landed near the outlet of Lake George and preceded in three columns towards the fort. At the head of one column was Lord Howe, at that time considered by many to be the finest soldier of the English armies in America. He was a model of military virtue; a capable general; a favorite with the rank and file of the army. In him they had great trust, for he was not unfamiliar with the ground, having scouted the section previously with John Stark. He was aware too, that a few cannon placed on Mount Defiance would cause the French to retire quickly.

As Howe's column proceeded, firing was heard in the woods to one side. Being ever on the alert, he rushed up with a small party to learn its cause. As they broke over a slight rise of ground near Trout Brook, they came upon an outpost of French, who immediately retreated, but not before firing a volley at the advancing Englishmen. By some adverse stroke of fate, a bullet from this volley found its mark in the heart of Lord Howe, who fell backward and died without a sound. His death proved to be the death of the expedition, for his loss was irreparable and thenceforth the attack proceeded in utter defiance of reason.

At this time the French advance post was on a high hill overlooking the portage landing, called by the French, "Mill Heights" and later renamed Mount Hope. After a long period of serious indecision Montcalm elected to withdraw from Mount Hope and the portage landing to a high ridge southwest of Carillon.

Courtesy Glens Falls Ins. Co.

SCOTCH HIGHLANDERS AT TICONDEROGA July 8, 1758

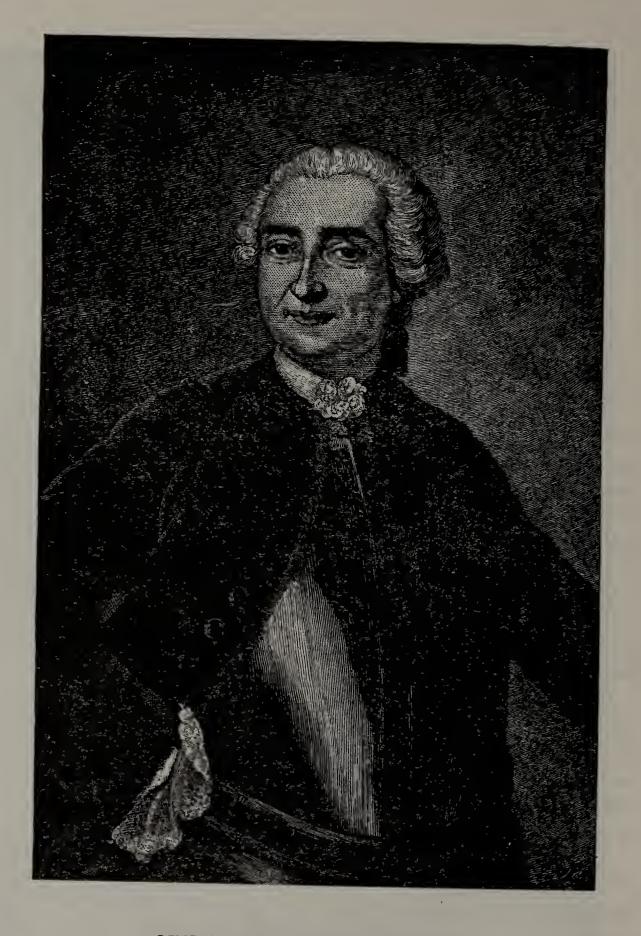
Montcalm's army was composed almost entirely of regular troops. Hoping the British would make a frontal attack, he immediately raised a zig-zag breastwork nine feet high, full of angles and surmounted by artillery. It extended northerly from the bluff along the outlet to Ticonderoga Creek for a full half mile. In front of this a deep trench was dug, and in front of the trench trees were felled with their sharpened branches bristling outward.

Against this practically impregnable barrier, which was defended by great gallantry on the part of the French, Abercrombie foolishly sent his finest regiments on July 8. All afternoon the battle raged unceasingly, with terrific slaughter on the part of the Frenchmen. Being ably generaled by Montcalm and Levis, they sent volley after volley into the ranks of the unshielded Englishmen, who rushed, with fierce abandon and wonderful courage, upon the abatis. Of all the English regiments the Scotch Highlanders fought the bravest and fared the worst. They alone were able to break through the barrier and over the breast works, but there they were quickly dispatched by the sword or bayonet. Of the English loss of 2,000 on that fateful day, 800 were from the ranks of the High-In the thickest of the fight were they and the piercing notes of their bagpipes could be heard constantly, rising and falling above the noise of the musketry and the fearful shouts of the combatants.

Regiment after regiment of Abercrombie's finest fighters were cut to pieces. Still the incapable blunderer, who was two miles from the battlefield, would not call off the attack. Toward nightfall it became apparent, even to his unmilitary mind, that Montcalm's fortifications were 'truly impregnable. Then the order for general retreat was given.

The withdrawal was most unorderly. Many soldiers, being terror stricken lest they fall into the hands of the French, threw away their guns, left their dead unburied upon the field and ran for Lake George. Here they embarked again in great haste.

Montcalm once stated that if he had had men enough to pursue the retreating Englishmen he could have wiped out the whole army. Being unable to do this, he proclaimed a holiday for his soldiers and



GENERAL LOUIS JOSEPH DE MONTCALM

an hour of thanksgiving for all. On the battlefield he erected a huge cross. Inscribed upon it were these words penned by himself.

"Quid dux? quid miles? quid strata igentia ligna?
En Signum! en victor! Deus hic Deus ipse triumphat"

"Soldiers and chief, and ramparts' strength are naught; Behold the Conquering Cross! 'Tis God the triumph wrought'

In this battle fell Duncan Campbell whose death inspired Stevenson to write the poem, "Ticonderoga," one of the most weird ghost stories ever composed.

Disappointed and chagrined by Abercrombie's dismal failure, England began at once to build an army for another expedition.

During the year which elapsed before a new expedition set out, the territory around Forts St. Frederic and Ticonderoga were scouted constantly by Rogers and his Rangers, who had been active in this capacity for a number of years. While Rogers could not encounter the French in open battle because of his small force, he did manage to harass them to a great degree. Many are the stories of the bravery and endurance of him and his rangers in the face of terrible hardship.

On one occasion Rogers and his men were reconnoitering in the vicinity of Fort St. Frederic. Rogers, anxious to learn as much of the enemy as possible, crawled close to the fort wall and there concealed himself behind a log. He had no more than reached this position when the gates of the fort swung open and a group of soldiers came out to begin drilling a short distance from him. Being too close to them to retreat, Rogers remained motionless in his position.

Suddenly a soldier detached himself from the others and walked directly toward the place where Rogers was concealed. Sure of being discovered, Rogers sprang forth from his hiding place and offered quarter. Instead of submitting, the soldier made a lunge at him with his dirk. Rogers shot him dead.

Upon hearing the report, the soldiers rushed to the spot. Here they found the bleeding corpse of their comrade but no other sign of life. Rogers had disappeared in thin air and no trace of him could be found.



CAPTAIN ROBERT ROGERS

Over the fireplace in the slab house at "The Mount Hope Fort" hangs an excellent woodcarving made from this picture by the late Margaret A. Porter.



Courtesy of Glens Falls Insurance Co.



At another time, a small group of rangers with Rogers in command, was ambushed by a much larger number of French and Indians in Lord Howe Valley, not far from Ticonderoga. After a fierce hand-to-hand struggle in which Rogers saw that his rangers were likely to be annihilated, he gave the signal to disperse.

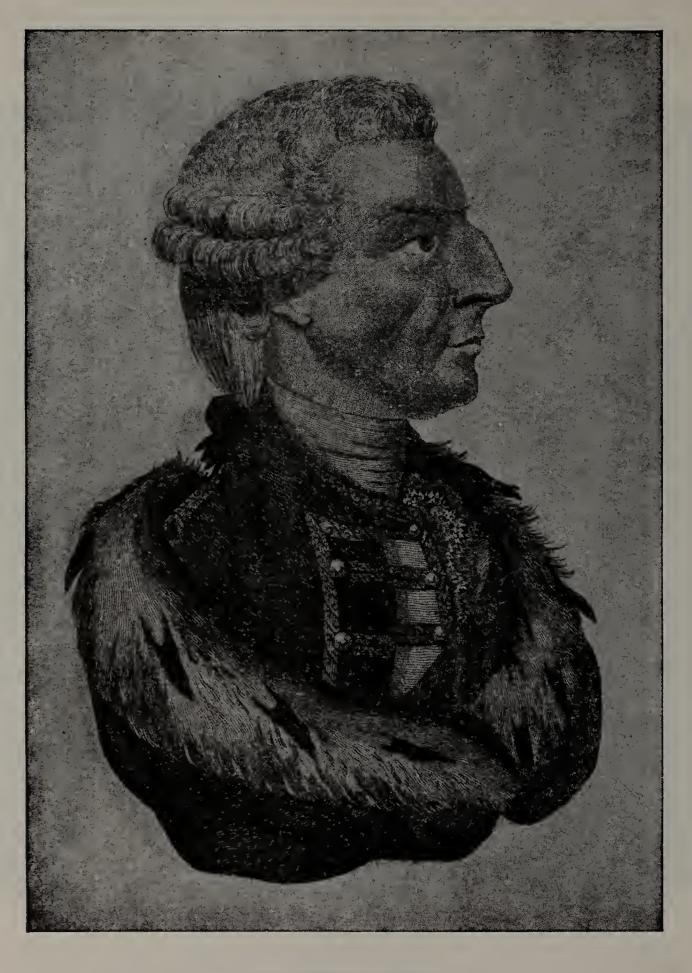
Every man struck out alone while Rogers himself broke through the ranks of the French and fled toward Lake George. A band of Algonquins gave chase. Being a large well built man and an expert on snowshoes, with which all his men were equipped, he managed to put several hundred feet between himself and his pursuers. Soon he reached the great cliff overlooking the lake. Here he quickly scuffed the snow around, put his snowshoes on backwards, and went off at an angle, from where he descended to the lake by a trail.

In the meantime, the savages arrived at the top of the cliff. On seeing two snowshoe tracks coming from different directions and the snow tramped and scuffed, they thought two men had come together there, had fought together, and had fallen over the cliff. Upon seeing Rogers alive and unhurt on the ice below, they concluded that he was protected by the great spirit and pursued him no further. Such feats of skill as this made Rogers the greatest and most feared scout in the English army.

By the early summer of 1759, another English army had been raised under the command of Lord Jeffery Amherst. On July 26, a little more than a year after Abercrombie's inglorious defeat, Amherst's army moved against Carillon, planning to take it by siege. The French, now too weak to do otherwise, due to the departure of a large part of their army for Quebec and the absence of Montcalm, partially destroyed the fort and retreated toward Canada, after holding Lake Champlain for more than 150 years.

Amherst immediately commenced repairing Carillon. He renamed it Fort Ticonderoga. His rangers were ordered to seize Fort St. Frederic, but upon arriving at Crown Point they found that the French had destroyed that fort and the surrounding settlements.

In early August, 1759, Amherst himself reached Crown Point and traced out the lines of a new fort about 200 yards west of Fort St. Frederic. Three thousand men labored on this fort for more than a year but even then it was not completed according to the original



LORD JEFFREY AMHERST

plans. England spent \$10,000,000 in its construction. Their idea was that it would be of great value in case of future attacks. Unlike Carillon, the outer walls of Fort Crown Point were covered with soil and planted to grass and vines, probably with the object of making the walls more impregnable against artillery fire. The fort itself was laid out in the shape of a five point star with huge stone buildings on the inside for the housing of officers and men. From the inner walls to the lake ran an underground passage by which water might be obtained in case of prolonged siege. The total distance around the top of the turf-covered outer wall measured a little over a half mile.

In October of that year, Amherst embarked his entire fleet toward Canada. Due to high seas and winds he soon returned, after having sunk three French sloops and a schooner near Valcour Island.

Fort Crown Point was also the starting point of Rogers' expedition against the St. Francis Indians in Canada. After great hardship, the rangers reached the village, wiped out the inhabitants, and began the return journey. They were pursued by a band of French. All of Rogers' great powers of leadership were put to a terrible test to keep his rangers from starving or being massacred by the French. Finally, after weeks of travel in which the rangers dug roots for food and went barefooted through the woods, they reached Charleston, N. H., gaunt, feverish, and ghost-like; more dead than alive.

These were dark days for Montcalm, for he received little cooperation from France and only the vilest treatment from the officials of Canada. He made his last stand at Quebec where he was defeated by the heroic English General Wolfe, on September 14, 1759. In that fierce encounter both Wolfe and Montcalm were killed. The funeral bell of Montcalm also tolled the death knell of New France for in a treaty signed in 1763, France ceded Canada and all her possessions in America to England, with the exception of two small fishing islands near Newfoundland.



STATUE OF ETHAN ALLEN

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

After the French and Indian War, the great valley began to be settled rapidly. Many people came in from the southern end, while great numbers of French and Canadians crossed over the border and took over the territory around Plattsburgh.

During these years, the forts along the lake were kept garrisoned by the English as a precautionary measure in case echoes of the French and Indian War should develop.

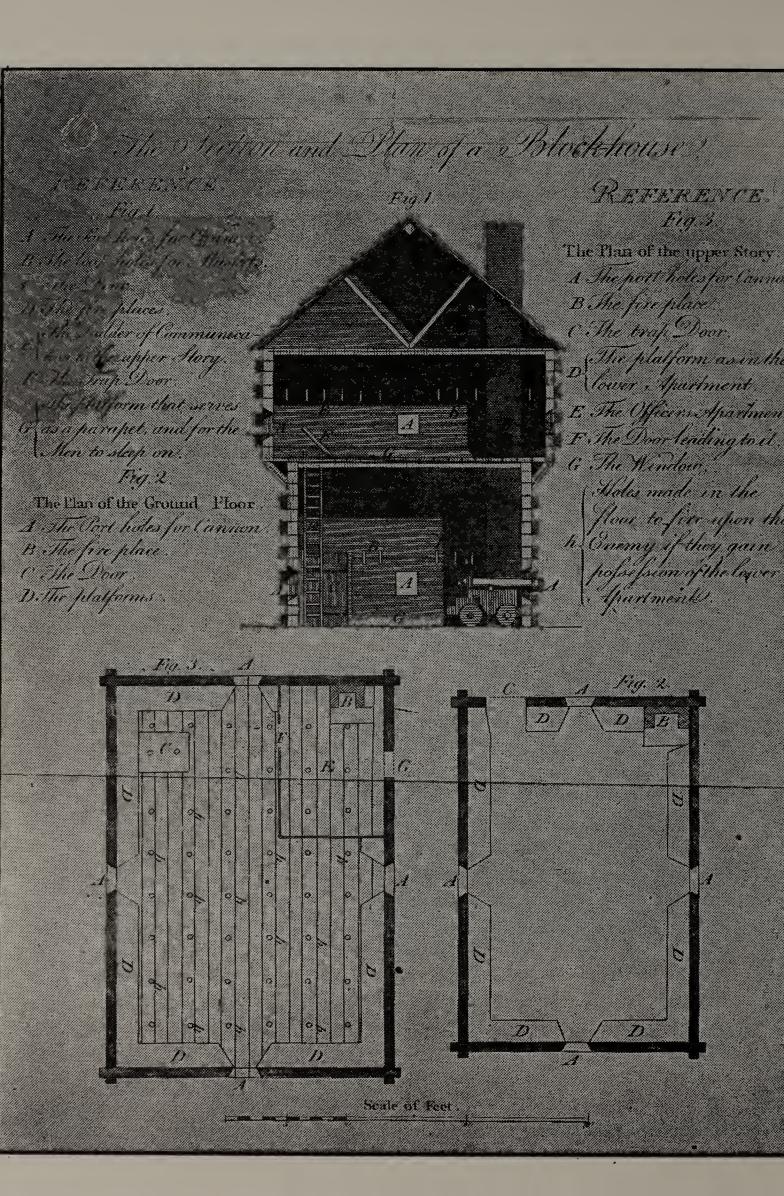
Fort Ticonderoga contained a small force which stood guard over the "Gateway to the Country" for a number of years. A tragic legend of this period has come down to us through word of mouth.

It seems that at that time a beautiful and virtuous Indian girl was visiting at the fort. While she was there, an English officer fell madly in love with her and made obvious advances toward her. She disliked him and avoided him as much as possible.

One evening she was walking alone near the wall of the fort in the vicinity of the flag bastion. Suddenly the officer stepped out from the shadows and attacked her. She struggled with him and finally broke from his grasp to run along the top of the wall. He pursued her and would have caught her had not she, realizing her predicament, calmly stepped off the highest point and was instantly killed on the jagged rocks below.

When the first blow of the Revolution was struck at Lexington Common in 1775, England became aroused to the fact that she had a real war on her hands. She retained and strengthened her grasp on Ticonderoga, for it commanded the route between New York and Canada.

What England saw, New England saw as well. Throughout the section a demand rose for the capture of Fort Ticonderoga. The Green Mountain Boys, with Ethan Allen at their head, finally decided to make the attempt. The expedition was set for the night of May 9, 1775, and in preparation for that event, Allen gathered all the men he could possibly muster. On the night of the ninth, few boats were available to transport the men across the lake. Nevertheless, by crossing and recrossing with them, eighty-two hard bitten Green Mountain Boys were finally drawn up beneath



the walls of the old fort when the first light of day broke. One of these men was Benedict Arnold who was appointed to command the expedition but who gave way to Allen, the usual leader of the outfit.



GENERAL BENEDICT ARNOLD

When all was ready, the little band stealthily approached the ramparts. As they came through the little door on the south side of the fort a sentry saw them and immediately gave the alarm. He then turned and, aiming point blank at Allen, pulled the trigger. Luckily the gun missed fire and the Green Mountain Boys quickly captured and disarmed him.

Rushing to the parade ground, Allen's men raised a great shout which awoke the garrison, Lieutenant Feltham, 2nd in command, appeared in the door of his quarters clad in his sleeping garments and holding a candle in his hands. "In whose name do you demand the surrender of this fort," he asked. Then came Allen's picturesque answer, "In the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress." Before the day had fully dawned, the fort and garrison had been captured without the firing of a shot and this mighty stronghold had once more changed hands.

The following day Seth Warner set out with a small band to capture Crown Point. The English expected this and, after destroying the fort as much as possible, evacuated by way of the lake. Warner approached carefully, but found the fort utterly deserted.

About this time, Captain Herrick attacked Skeenesboro (White-hall). Here he captured young Major Skeene and over sixty others along with a few boats which he used to get to Ticonderoga, where he joined forces with Allen.

At Ticonderoga, Allen captured forty-eight men, one hundred twenty pieces of cannon, several swivels and howitzers, together with a large quantity of small arms and ammunition of every description. Of the artillery taken at Ticonderoga, forty-three cannons and sixteen mortars were transported on sleds the following winter to Cambridge, Mass., by General Knox. Here they were used to force the British to evacuate Boston.

In September, General Montgomery embarked at Crown Point with about 3,000 men on an expedition against the English in Canada. On November 3, while advancing against Montreal, he captured St. Johns on the Richelieu River. There was much fighting on Canadian soil during the fall and early winter with the colonials giving a good account of themselves on each occasion. Finally on December 13, the Americans reached Quebec and stormed the city, even though their army was much smaller than the English defending force. The American troops displayed great gallantry and were on the point of carrying the breastworks when a blinding snowstorm arose which made it useless for the attackers to continue. In their last desperate assault the brave Montgomery was mortally wounded and here, on the soil hallowed by the death

of Wolfe and Montcalm in 1759, he too laid down his life, fighting for his country.

Arnold now took command of the retreating men with the English following almost on their heels. By extreme skill and cleverness he managed to keep out of reach of them although his army suffered terribly from want of clothing, food, and rest. To add to the already heart-rending condition of the soldiers the dreaded small-pox broke out among them. Throughout the horrible ordeal Arnold remained calm, keeping the men moving ever southward. Many of them fell by the wayside, victims of disease and exposure.

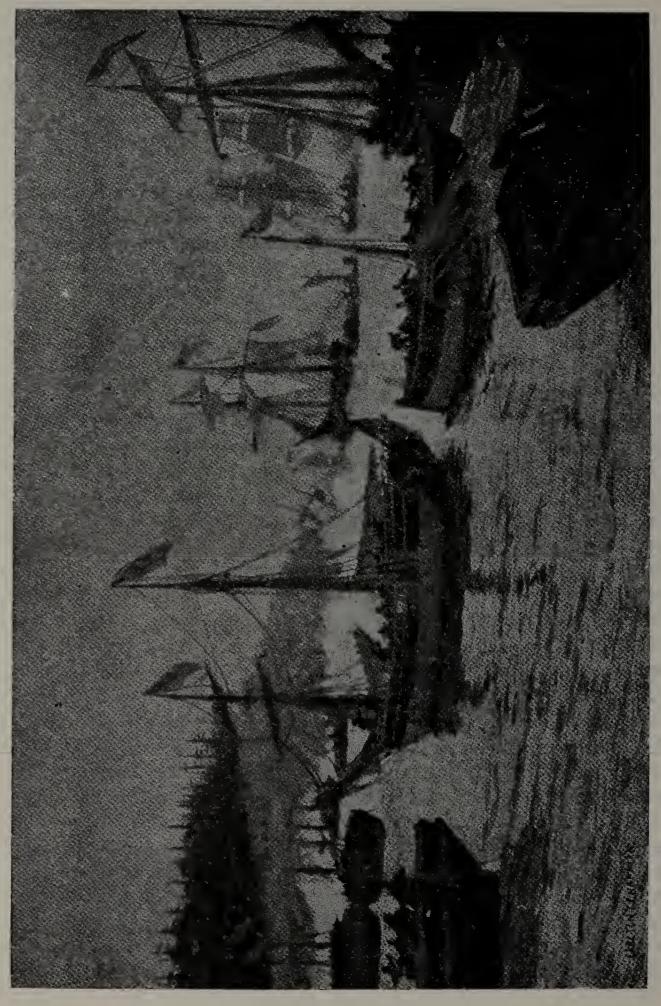
Upon reaching Isle Aux Noix, at the northern end of Lake Champlain, Arnold found that over half his men were unable to continue. He ordered a halt while rude shelters were constructed for the sick. In the few days that they remained there the smallpox victims died so rapidly that it was impossible to bury them. Consequently they were thrown into great open pits, the stench and flies from which became so severe that the surviving members were once more forced to continue southward.

After months of unbelievable hardships and suffering, the "fragments of the army of Canada" reached Crown Point early in July. Ten days later they fell back to Ticonderoga. The story of the service of this army constitutes one of the most tragic chapters in the history of the Revolution.

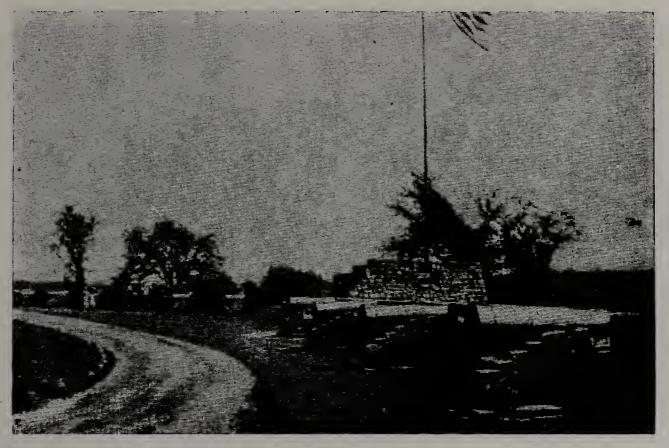
During the summer of 1776, the English began planning an invasion by way of the Great Valley. To gain control of the lake they built a fleet, which they hoped would keep the water route clear.

Arnold, who still remained in the vicinity of the lake, put forth all his powers and managed to build, out of green lumber, a fleet much inferior to the English, but manned by men of great courage. On October 11 he met the English off the southwestern coast of Valcour Island. The battle continued fiercely all day. Under cover of darkness Arnold slipped away and set sail for Crown Point which he finally reached after losing several ships. The rest he sank so that they would not fall into the hands of the enemy. The British, although victorious in the engagement, were so discouraged at their losses they retired to Montreal for the winter.

During the winter, England made plans for the coming invasion.



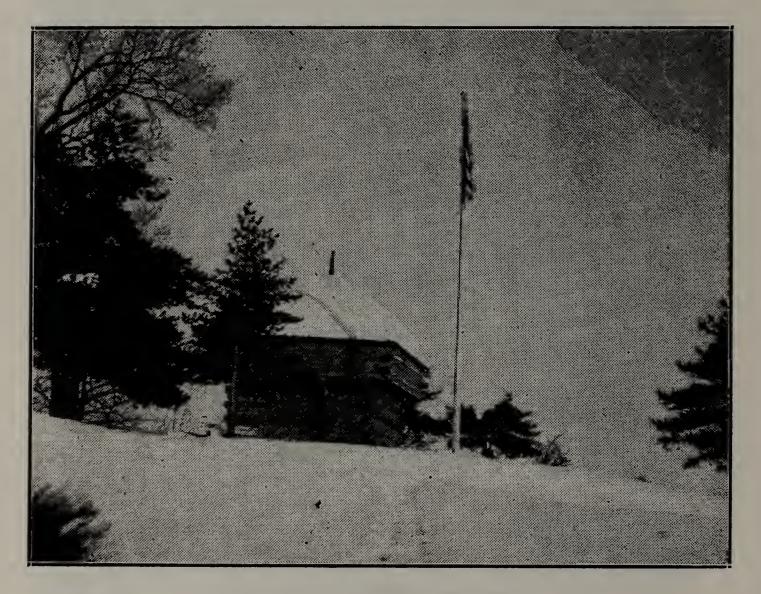
Her fleet was greatly enlarged and her ships repaired while Burgoyne's army was substantially increased by the addition of a large number of recruits, many of them being Indians. July, 1777, saw this vast army and fleet moving slowly southward intent on the capture of New York, thus splitting the colonies in two. In the meantime, the Americans towards the southern end of Lake Champlain



FLAG BASTION, FORT TICONDEROGA

were busily engaged, preparing to resist the invasion. Reinforcements were obtained from the eastern states. Ship carpenters were employed at Skeenesboro to build hulls of galleys and boats. The most active efforts were made to enlarge and strengthen Fort Ticonderoga. The small fort at Skeenesboro was repaired. In a word, the lake above Ticonderoga presented a scene of activity, with boats constantly passing and repassing, loaded with men, provisions, and munitions of war.

The northern department of the American Army, including Albany, Fort Stanwix, and Ticonderoga, was in charge of Major General Schuyler, while immediate command of the works on Lake Champlain was confided to Major General St. Clair. Burgoyne's huge army of more than seven thousand easily captured Crown Point which was poorly garrisoned. Here they encamped for a night while the Americans retreated south. The English approached Fort Ticonderoga more cautiously however, for the garrison there had been enlarged and many repairs had also been made. The old French lines to the west of the fort had been repaired



THE MOUNT HOPE FORT IN WINTER

and were now guarded by a blockhouse. A hospital was established near the landing at the foot of Lake George, and a star fort erected on Mount Independence, just across the channel in Vermont. A strong battery also stood on the shore of the mouth of East Creek, an arm of the lake which extends for some distance along the easterly

side of Mount Independence. A floating bridge connected Fort Ticonderoga with Fort Independence.

In the autumn of 1776 St. Clair had constructed a large outpost fort on Mount Hope, the height of ground which controlled the portage landing at the falls. This fort was made of earth and logs and covered nearly three acres of ground. It contained, within its walls, a blockhouse, guard house and powder magazine.

Burgoyne attacked in three columns. One division moved along the Vermont shore; the center, with Burgoyne in command, moved forward accompanied by the gunboats; a third division captured Mount Hope and held the plateau to the west.

The Mount Hope Fort was occupied by General Phillips on July 2, 1777 accompanied by Fraser's Corps, the first English Brigade and two brigades of artillery. The British immediately opened with cannon fire from Mount Hope and the Americans, entrenched in the old French lines, returned the fire. This continued for two days without serious result to either side due to the great distance involved.

With the Americans almost surrounded, Burgoyne's engineers discovered that, by some stroke of inefficiency, the Americans had failed to fortify Mount Defiance. This lies near the fort and is the highest elevation in the vicinity. He immediately ordered that a cannon be placed there. On the morning of July 5, 1777, the American soldiers awoke to see English cannon and scarlet uniforms frowning down upon them.

In an interval of less than 36 hours the British, under Lieutenant Twiss, had performed the astounding feat of building a rough road up Mount Defiance and had dragged several Cannon to a rock shelf near the pinnacle. They had also begun the construction of a huge blockhouse at the summit. Having anchored their cannon in the rocks the artillerymen now began to blow Fort Ticonderoga apart.

Viewing the situation with alarm, General St. Clair called a council of war by whom it was decided to evacuate, before the land route across Mount Independence or the water route to the south should be closed against them. A warm fire was continued against The Mount Hope Fort while preparations for departure were made.

Boats laden with cannon, tents, and provisions reached Skeenes-

boro in the afternoon, followed closely by three British regiments with gunboats. At Skeenesboro, the Americans blew up their galleys and set fire to the fort, mill, and storehouse. Then they retreated to Fort Edward.

St. Clair, with his main army, fled toward Castleton by land, but was overtaken by a large British force under General Fraser and Riedesel at Hubbardton. In the ensuing battle, the Americans suffered heavy losses and fled in confusion. St. Clair retreated to Fort Edward and later to Saratoga.

Meanwhile Col. John Brown, a brave but little known Colonial officer, led about 500 men down Lake George and attacked Fort Ticonderoga from the rear. Brown captured Mount Hope and Mount Defiance as well as the portage landing. Although he held Mount Defiance, the key to Fort Ticonderoga, he had no artillery and could not press the attack. After several days he was forced to retreat.

From Skeenesboro on, Burgoyne's path was beset with many difficulties. The Americans felled trees and destroyed bridges in his path so that his average speed became only one mile a day. Destitute for provisions, he sent a detachment to Bennington to capture some. They were met by John Stark and his Green Mountain Boys who defeated and captured the whole regiment.

The delay in Burgoyne's march gave the Americans time to gather at Saratoga. By the time he reached that place his army was almost surrounded by the colonists. The English fought bravely, but were twice defeated and compelled to surrender; a surrender brought about largely through the work of Arnold and Morgan.

The news of Burgoyne's defeat was a signal to the British garrison at Ticonderoga to retreat to Canada. As they passed the mouth of the Boquet River, a party of Green Mountain Boys, led by Captain Allen, cut off some of their boats, capturing fifty men along with a large supply of military stores.

Thus closed the major military operations of the Revolutionary War on Lake Champlain, although minor clashes occurred about Ticonderoga and along the lake as late as 1781. A treaty of peace between England and the new nation was signed in Paris, September 3, 1783.

THE WAR OF 1812

For many years after the revolution the Champlain valley was the scene of the homes of many hardy settlers. The story of their hardships, sufferings, and sacrifices can be equaled only by the joy they felt at having independent homes in the wilderness, of cutting virgin timber, and tilling virgin soil.

These industrious people probably took little interest in England's repeated impressment of sailors after the revolution, for their humble farms in the wilderness were far removed from the great wharves of the shippers, where England's animosity was the topic of much bitter discussion. When war was declared in June, 1812, however, the people of the Champlain valley became stirred with deep feelings of an impending struggle in which their great valley would play an important part.

At that time the British had an army of 10,000 men stationed in Canada, though only about 1,000 of them were in striking distance of the American border. By September of that year the United States had about 8,000 men at Plattsburgh, with outposts as far north as Chazy and Champlain village. This army crossed into Canada where engagements were fought but without serious loss to either side. They soon returned to Plattsburgh, stationed three regiments there, sent three to Burlington, and disbanded the militia.

At the opening of the war the British had no vessels on the lake. Late in 1812 the United States government gave charge of its naval operations on Lake Champlain to Lieut. Thomas MacDonough. By the spring of 1813 he had brought out three sloops the President, the Crowler and the Eagle. During the summer of that year, while they were cruising near Ash Island in the Richelieu, the Crowler and Eagle engaged three British gunboats. After a fierce encounter lasting several hours the Eagle went down and the Crowler ran ashore. Both fell into the hands of the British who remodeled them, changing their names to the Finch and the Chubb. The capture of these two vessels gave the British the stronger lake force.

MacDonough quickly added six gunboats and three small sloops to his fleet. Before he could do this however, and while there were

no troops stationed at Plattsburgh, the British descended on the city. In the attack they destroyed or plundered a large amount of both public and private property and ruined the blockhouse, arsenal, armory, and village hospital.

Little else of real importance took place in 1813 although skirmishing was carried on to an extent which kept the great gateway in a constant state of alarm but without causing much injury to either British or Americans.

Eighteen hundred and fourteen tells a much different story. In March of that year an American force of six hundred attacked the British at Lacolle. They were repulsed and counter-attacked by the British, with a loss of one hundred four Americans and fifty-six Englishmen. The next day the main body fell back to Chazy and Plattsburgh.

During the spring and summer both armies strengthened their positions along the frontier, and large reenforcements joined the army at Plattsburgh, while the British were strengthened by detachments from Montreal and Quebec.

On July 17, one thousand four hundred American troops advanced as far as Chazy. Ten days later they occupied the village of Champlain. Shortly after, one thousand two hundred militiamen took Cumberland Head at Plattsburgh, where they set up a battery of eighteen pounders. MacDonough's fleet, in the meantime, had anchored in King's Bay, about five miles south of Rouses Point. The British held Lacolle with three thousand six hundred men and also had strong garrisons at Isle Aux Noix and St. Johns, with more than five thousand at other nearby points and Montreal.

On July 31, twelve British regiments advanced to Chazy, and several more regiments were concentrated at Isle Aux Noix. Everything now seemed ready for a battle which would perhaps decide the fate of the campaign and the control of the gateway of the country. At this stage of the game the United States government, for some unknown reason, ordered the removal of a large body of troops from Lake Champlain, leaving only about two thousand fighting men to garrison Plattsburgh and Cumberland Head. When this order had been carried out, General Macomb immediately began preparations to resist an attack.

On September 3, fourteen thousand British troops were brought to Champlain, all under Sir George Prevost, Governor General of Canada. On the night of September 5 this force was encamped eight miles north of Plattsburgh.

At Plattsburgh the Americans occupied the south and east side of the Saranac River between that stream and Lake Champlain, where they had erected defenses. The principal stronghold was Fort Moreau opposite the bend in the river, along with Forts Brown and Scott. On the point near the mouth of the river they set up a blockhouse and battery.

On September 6 the British army, although engaged by the Americans north of Plattsburgh, pressed steadily forward. The Americans retreated to the east side of the Saranac. From that side they successfully resisted every effort of the British to cross. For three days both armies were busily engaged in preparation for the inevitable struggle.

The morning of September 11, 1814, saw the English boats closing in on the American fleet, which lay in Cumberland Bay. The American squadron, of fourteen vessels, carried eighty-six guns; the British armament, of seventeen vessels, numbered ninety-five guns. As the British approached they received a broadside from the American fleet, which they returned with great vigor. For two and a half hours the battle raged. Eventually the British, their ships sinking and guns disabled, struck their colors. In this engagement the American loss was one hundred ten in killed and wounded; that of the British equally great. So severe was this combat that there was not a mast in either fleet fit for use when the smoke cleared.

The land battle took place on the same day. The British forces attempted to cross the Saranac, but were repulsed at almost every angle. The old Bridge Street bridge was the scene of much bloodshed. The British advanced to the bridge in open formation but the Americans removed the planking from it and then picked the attackers off, one by one.

When General Prevost, from his vantage point on the top of a high hill overlooking both battles, saw the British ships haul down their flags, he decided that further efforts were useless. The order for the land forces to retreat to Canada was given. This was accomplished with the loss of two thousand men and huge quantities of stores and ammunition.

Thus ended the second attempt of British arms to control the Champlain Valley. Soldiers and sailors of both British and American fleets who were killed in these actions were later buried on Crab Island in Lake Champlain, where a huge monument has since been erected to them. Captain Downey and the British and American officers who fell with him are buried in Plattsburgh cemetery. The treaty of peace, signed in December, 1814, ended this final clash of arms between the two great English-speaking nations, and brought to a close the military history of Lake Champlain, after five waves of organized military turmoil, extending from 1689 to 1814, a period of one hundred twenty-five years.

It is true that Fort Montgomery was built after this date but this could hardly be called a military event of importance. This fort, which is located at Rouses Point, was by mistake erected on Canadian soil. Consequently it was known as Fort Blunder until a treaty with England was negotiated in 1842, which gave the land to the United States. At this time a new and larger fort was built on this site and called Fort Montgomery. This fort was never garrisoned and is not considered a military relic of consequence.

CONCLUSION

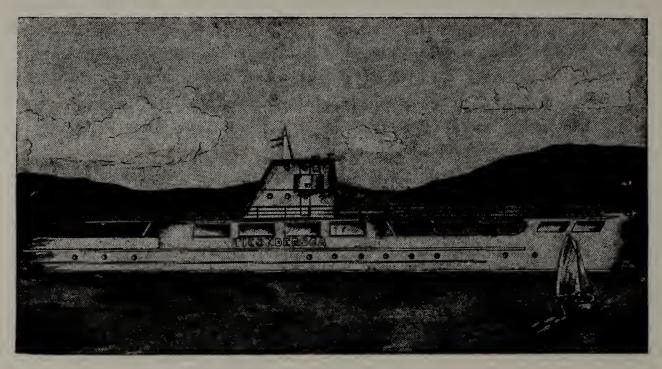
Today the Champlain Valley is a valley of peace. No more do the painted savages stalk noiselessly along the shores of the lake in search of deer, or paddle swiftly over its surface on some bloody errand of death. The real American Indian is extinct. He has gone from this earth, never to return; a victim of onrushing civilization and the strange ways of the white man, which have combined to wipe out his primitive but happy way of living.

Gone, too, is the pageantry of mighty armies; the horror of gory massacres; the solitude of frontier cabins. In their place have risen modern villages, fertile farms, and peaceful homes.

Only a few of our historical relics in the Great Valley have been preserved. Still, it is not hard to stand on the crumbling walls of one of the old forts, look out over the calm waters of majestic Champlain, and imagine the story of our turbulent past, especially if it is on a warm summer evening just after the sun has set. For then it is that the lapping waves divulge their secrets and the haunting voices of the heroes of our glorious heritage float in to us across the water.

The End

In writing this narrative of the history of Lake Champlain, the author has attempted to give a composite picture of events which have taken place in the Great Valley, in the order in which they occurred. Unfortunately it has been impossible, in this short work, to record innumerable interesting experiences and sidelights which have helped to make the history of Lake Champlain the romantic story that it is. The events here recorded are only those which have been of the most vital importance in the progress of the Great Valley and of our country.



THE M.V. "TICONDEROGA" ON LAKE GEORGE

This ship, an original L.C.I. of the U.S. Navy was brought to Larrabees Point on Lake Champlain in the fall of 1949, was cut in three pieces and transported overland via the old Indian portage to Lake George. It makes daily round trips through Lake George, being owned by The Lake George Steamboat Co.

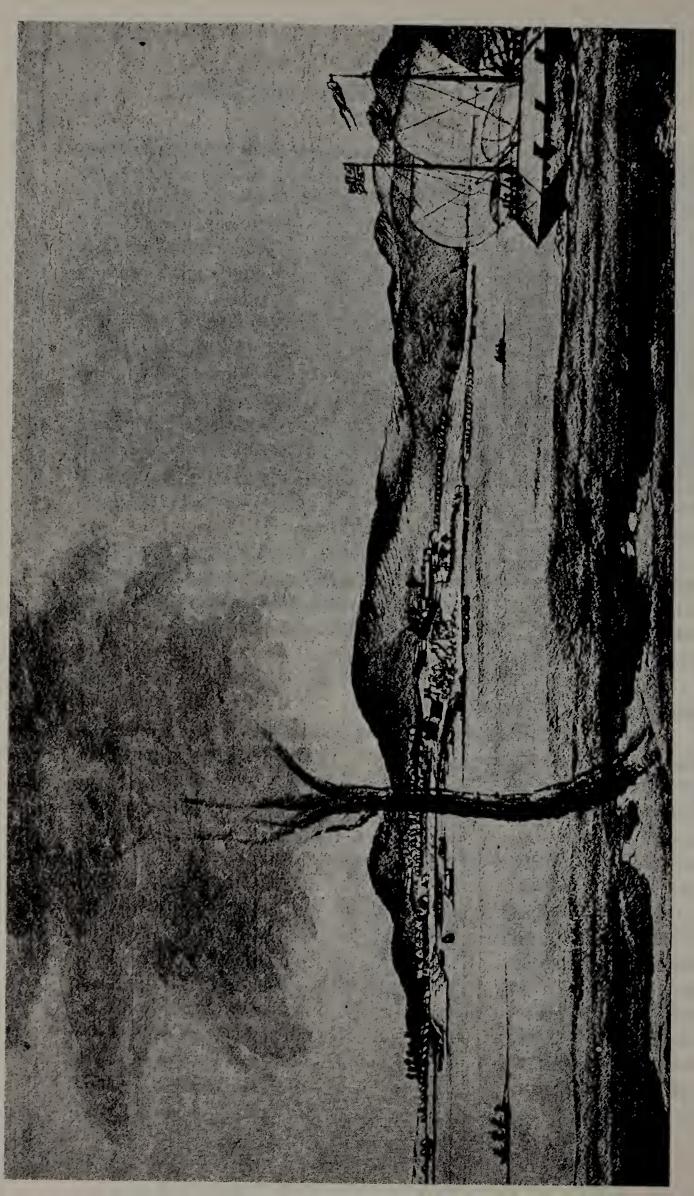
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- "Fort Ticonderoga," S. H. P. Pell
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- "History of Essex County," Hazelton Smith
- "History of the Adirondacks," Donaldson
- "History of Essex County," Watson
- "History of Lake Champlain," Crockett
- "Quebec, Historic Seaport," de la Roche

PLACES OF HISTORICAL INTEREST

In the Champlain Valley

Whitehall (Skeenesboro)
Hubbardton Battle Field
Fort Ticonderoga
John Hancock House (State Historical Assn. Headquarters)
Ticonderoga, New York
Black Watch Library
Liberty Monument
Mount Defiance
THE MOUNT HOPE FORTTiconderoga, New York
Lord Howe Valley (scene of Rogers' Battle on snowshoes)
Ticonderoga, New York
Lord Howe's Grave Central Park, Ticonderoga, New York
Middlebury College
Sheldon Museum
Chimney Point
Israel Putnam Monument
Indian Ridge, Crown Point Village, New York
Civil War Monument. Village Park, Crown Point Village, New York
Fort Crown Point
Fort St. Frederic Crown Point Reservation, New York
Champlain Memorial Monument
Crown Point Reservation, New York
Ruins of French Village
Nadeau Farm, Crown Point Reservation, New York
Bennington Battle FieldBennington, Vermont
Split Rock
Gunboat Philadelphia
Ausable Chasm Keeseville, New York
Valcour Island
John Brown's HomeLake Placid, New York
Plattsburgh Barracks
Soldiers and Sailors Monument Plattsburgh, New York
Champlain Memorial
Gunboat Rock
Crab Island Monument
Kent De Lord House
Fort Montgomery
Lacolle Battle FeldLacolle, Quebec, Canada
Isle Aux NoixSt. Jean, Quebec, Canada
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CROWN POINT, 1776, FROM A DRAWING IN ENGLAND



The author in the role of Red Jacket, famous Seneca Chief At the Annual Indian Pageant at Ticonderoga, August 13, 1949.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carroll Vincent Lonergan has spent his entire life in the Champlain Valley. When he was four years old his father purchased the farm which contained a good share of the Mount Hope Fort. Ten years ago Mr. Lonergan fulfilled a dream of his father when he purchased additional land, partially restored the fort by his own labor and opened the grounds to visitors. In 1956, 75,000 people visited the Mount Hope Fort.

For several years Mr. Lonergan has been a teacher of History in the public schools and has written several histories of Lake Champlain and its shores. A director of the nationally known Indian Pageant at Ticonderoga for three years he has also played the title role in two dramas, "The Conspiracy of Pontiac" and "Scenes from the Life of Red Jacket." He would like to eventually spend all of his time at historical writing, exploration and research.

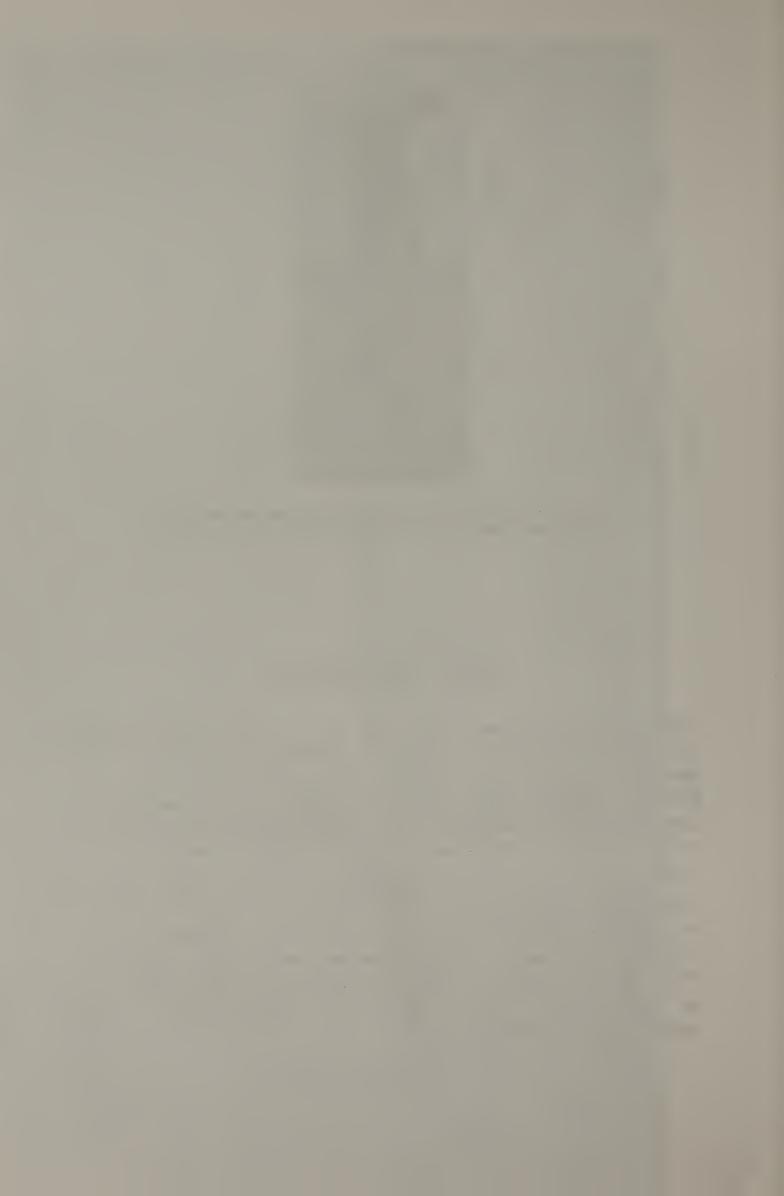








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Philadelphia, Pa.	240	186	376	227	291	238	355	88	395	301	407	163	334	404	272	255	264
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